

City of Gahanna

*200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230*



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 3, 2010

Plenary Session with Development

6:00 PM

City Hall

Planning Commission Workshop

David K. Andrews

Anthony Penn

Jennifer Price

Kristin Rosan

Donald R. Shepherd

David B. Thom

Robert Westwood

Stacey L. Bashore, Deputy Clerk of Council

ITEMS FROM DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Update on Olde Gahanna Vision Plan

Huffman gave a Slideshow presentation to update the Commission on the Olde Gahanna Vision Plan. (Copies available in the Council Office) Price asked what the general opinion was of the committee members for on street parking. Huffman stated that studies would need to be done; other areas within Central Ohio such as Worthington and Dublin that have on street parking; right now there is nothing definitive; worth looking into and come up with studies as to how it affects the area. Andrews asked why businesses in the area are not cleaning snow off their sidewalks. Gard stated that is a Police Code and there is nothing about Zoning enforcing it; no specific answers as to where that code belongs and who will enforce it. Thom asked if there were any complaints for not shoveling the sidewalks. White stated the Mayor is aware of it and is addressing it; also working on the streets; did get some complaints about streets not being plowed but that was because cars were parked on the street; some communities are now posting no parking signs for snow emergencies; will look at responsibility and requirements; someone has to do the enforcement and work on reminding people; we do have an automatic code red call that goes out to homeowners to remind them we have 48 hour no parking on street during snow emergencies. Andrews stated that Gahanna does a fantastic job clearing the streets. Thom stated one recommendation he would have is to have shared parking agreements and possibly shared dumpster agreements. Huffman stated we have talked about recycling and dumpsters; some businesses just don't want to have to lug it. White stated if there was incentive in the code we could possibly increase density if they do a shared parking agreement, or if they do something in landscaping; that's one of the ways it drops the costs again. Thom stated with tax abatements there should be some give and take. White stated that as part of our beautification plan we would like to incorporate water features; give people something interesting to look at.

Update on Hamilton Road Corridor Plan

Huffman gave a slideshow presentation. (Copies available in Council Office) Price asked if this area would remain Single Family if it was possibly redeveloped. Huffman stated we would keep it residential; highlighting parcels in question; we have someone who is an owner of 6 parcels and feels those parcels are old and not the best quality; bought them as investment but looking to get higher density; maybe get condos or apartments; get the pedestrian aspect. Westwood stated everything we talked about seems doable; there are a lot of people excited about the ideas; biggest key is attracting people to Gahanna and getting them off the interstate as a key destination.

Introduction of Leah Evans, Economic Development Manager

Huffman introduced Leah Evans as the City's economic development manager. Evans stated she appreciated the opportunity to speak to Planning; this position was a newly created position as of March 2009; I work directly with the business community and neighbors; work with existing businesses to help them grow and maintain and work to attract new businesses to the City; coordinate resources and events; working with businesses on how to bring more customers in especially during City events; work on the CRA areas and keeping track of their businesses and how they are performing; make sure that the City is getting the benefit of that investment; work with Chamber of Commerce and the state to gather leads from businesses and then follow up on the leads; one of the unique things we have to offer is industrial land adjacent to rail way; unique high class office space and rail within blocks; fiber deployment and CIC promoted to the highest level; promote the City on a national level; working with companies one and one; seeing the process all the way through; White stated Leah and Anthony work on

getting the information together for the business leads that come in; pull from database; collect regional and local information. Huffman stated that it can take months before an application shows up to Planning due to the amount of information that needs to be gathered to get the process started. Evans stated she also works with Code Enforcement and keeping up on the quality of the environment; smooths the process for a new investment. Penn asked how many jobs are created with the CRA. Evans stated those businesses report their jobs annually until they roll off; so far 3500 jobs have been met through their commitments. Thom stated there is a procedure in place if they go the other way and lose jobs. White stated that the management of those portfolios has become much more complicated because we have to prove the case that they are not performing as agreed upon; Anthony analyzes our break even point. Jones stated he has been working on the big projects and what's happening regionally; rules are changing; still trying to figure everything out. Price asked when you mentioned liquor permits, what happens when there are no more liquor licenses. Evans stated there is a market where they can transfer a liquor license; the businesses still own the license and can sell and transfer it to another business. Price asked what have they been hearing from the business community as to what the biggest obstacles are to bring new business to Gahanna; so many factors are out of our control like the economy. Evans stated that the costs to establish new businesses in a place like Creekside is high because some of them are built out and some are not; older spaces are not as cost prohibitive; we as a community have to think creatively to help with tenant improvements; we currently do not have an up front grant program; a dedicated development fund that would help new businesses; we are a largely built out and our tools are very limited; trying to address that through the CIC; Columbus 2020 is working to erase some of the stigma that the midwest has regarding development; trying to become more progressive. Price asked about abatements for improved buildings. Evans stated we can only abate the improved value. Price asked if this grant system was something other communities have and is this something that is a priority. White stated we are looking at all options; retail industry is shifting; people are not buying the same way; we work with smaller businesses to help them maintain and grow. Huffman stated Evans has contacts to help with business plans. Price asked if there were any uptakes in a certain market specifically to Gahanna. Evans stated it was smaller retailers, pizza shops and medical offices. Jones stated we need to get alternative financing options outside of the traditional ways; put ourselves in a competitive position and provide strategies.

Department's Goals and Objectives

Huffman gave a slideshow presentation. (Copies available in Council Office) Thom stated it was misleading on the first pass yield percentage. White stated we claim that as a benchmark of excellence; the applications that come before you now are better prepared when you look at them because we have changed codes. Thom stated he was not disagreeing with the number; but if we would have had more learning center type of projects we would be having more workshops; when you decrease the number of applications other things decrease too. Huffman stated these smaller applications are going to become more complicated as they go along; working on having more quality versus quantity. Thom stated he agreed with the time and work put in by Development; see a lot less problems then we have had in the past; attempted to be worked out. Gard stated that what we did with those 4 Code sections has the potential to affect 61% of the entire Zoning Code; we have had large complex zoning code changes. Andrews asked if there were any more Code updates planned. Gard stated we are going to examine the entire Code; still based on standard industry code system which is completely outdated; we are still using old version and because of that we are having to craft things together to accommodate new types of industry; one of my goals and objectives is to continue working on the Code diligently to bring new business and keep them; will be writing Codes for the next several years. Andrews asked how it has been working under those

old standards and are other communities using the same. Gard stated we want to get ahead of the curve and raise the bar. Jones stated the primary goals are to build, retract and retain; they are mirrored off regional initiatives; increase income tax per capita; increase number of employees and tax revenues by 3%; each goal has specific strategies for achieving these goals. Evans stated all of these things are indicators of the economic vitality of the community; percentage of employees vs residents; feel we can address it through our actions. Price asked about the income tax credit when you work outside of the City. White stated if you make \$100,000 and live and work in Gahanna, your income tax rate is 1.5%; for people who work in Columbus but live in Gahanna we give you a credit for a portion of what you pay to Columbus; cities make the majority of their revenue from income tax.

Existing Plans

Upcoming Projects

Gard stated there is a zoning application for a 2 story, 42 unit apartment building on the corner of Johnstown Road and Silver Lane; current zoning CC and they are requesting L-AR. Price asked about the Stonehenge/Hamilton Road project and what the time frame was on that. Gard stated it was approved sometime in July, so they are coming up on their 1 year validity; not sure whether or not they will get it in within that time frame; will have to come back with an FDP and DR if not.

ITEMS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION

Update on Development Agreement with Columbus and Whitehall

Thom asked about the development agreement with Net Jets; they've backed off; looks like they are back down to being profitable; anything going on. White stated the Joint Economic Development Strategy showed the area where it could be redeveloped; we said we need a comprehensive plan; capacity could create 20,000 more jobs; we received a \$50,000 grant to figure out how to come up with right organization; got the land bank parts together; did some analysis for job development and job growth; air related kinds of jobs; looking at the whole 5th Avenue area being redeveloped; started plans to reconstruct and make it a corridor so it looks much nicer; we didn't get to some of the things and what we might do; the airport has a development plan that has been approved; they will be growing over the next 20 years and we hope to capture some of those jobs; we still benefit from those that are there and those that will be there.

Update on Possible Buckle's Tract Developments

White stated we have started working on bids; Hamilton Road ramps have to be done first; we did get some stimulus funds; Engineering Department helped save the tax payers of Gahanna and sped up potential development; we could not have developed this tract before with limited access; all of that had to be changed so we could put an entrance there to make it a developable site; we are marketing it. Westwood asked if any businesses have shown interest; something that has a regional draw such as IKEA. Thom asked if the whole area would be developed as one or piece mail. White stated the corridor plan would say and recommend this should be developed as one; peculiar zoning has to be developed as a whole thing. Thom asked if there were any master plans. White stated if this is going to redevelop the City is going to cause it; if we put the right kind of overlay plan in we will have good sound development; trying to get a good plan on the table; not forcing it.